

Caledon Equestrian School celebrates 40 years in town

Written By **JASEN OBERMEYER**

Caledon Equestrian School celebrated their 40th anniversary of providing horse riding lessons to people of all ages from all walks of life.

Their open house took place this past Victoria Day Monday (May 21), and gave riders a chance to celebrate all the school has done. The school is located on Airport Road between King Road and Mayfield Road

"It was my dream," says owner Susan Fripp. "I don't look at it as my place, I look at it as our place."

She opened the school in July 1978, when the farm was originally called Sandhill Stables, with lessons held in the outdoor arena and a small 40' by 70' pole barn. She graduated from the Humber College Equine Studies program in 1979, became a certified Coach 1 in 1981 and a Coach 2 in 1984. "All I wanted was horses."

She described the relationship with them as a real bond. "You can't lie with horses, they know you, they feel you, and there's just a magic."

The school provides various program, such as the Pegasus Program for special needs. In the early years, the school has 30 to 40 students, but has now grown to 70 to 100, and currently has 14 horses. Riders range from being little kids, to 80 year-old seniors. "Everybody's on the same page, we're all here to learn. Nobody is better."

Ms. Fripp finds it hard to believe it has been 40 years. "You see how far this place has come. It's never looked better than it does now."

She admitted that when she started off, she didn't think it would be successful. "I never thought I'd be here this long."

Now, riders come Caledon, Orangeville, Etobicoke, Brampton, Mississauga, and Toronto. "I want people to feel welcome and safe."

In 1997, the school became home to Canada's first cover-all riding arena, something Ms. Fripp says was very magical to have. "All of a sudden I could now have a facility and really make my dream come true."

Asked what she is most proud of, she simply said herself and her students for what they have turned this school into, and the calibre of attitude in the riders.